

## The Professional Land Reform Group (PLRG)

Minutes of a meeting at the School of Economic Science, 11 Mandeville Street, London to re-launch PLRG on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2010 5.45pm

Present:

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Apologies:

John Pincham

- 1. Introduction.** Dave Wetzel, as Chair of PLRG hitherto, invited attendees to introduce themselves. He then outlined the origins and achievements of PLRG and the purpose of the meeting.
  - 1.1. As Vice Chair of Transport for London (TfL) until the 2008 Mayoral elections, Dave had support from his organisation, which supported the principle of “paying for infrastructure from land values”. He had encouraged academics and practising professionals to engage with the subject and one of them –Ashis Choudhury had suggested creation of PLRG, which Ashis and Dave co-founded in 2004 as Secretary and Chair respectively.
  - 1.2. Ashis had intimated he wished to stand down in late 2009. Dr Tony Vickers, one of the first to join PLRG (after the Henry George Foundation (HGF) allowed its outreach group Progressive Forum (HG/PF) to fold), had offered to help revive PLRG.
  - 1.3. Dave mentioned the Centre for Urban Sustainable Programmes “CUSP”, another group which had met at the instigation of Dave and Francesca Medda at UCL, to consider becoming a network of academic researchers to focus on the subject.
  - 1.4. Tony explained that the meeting had been advertised to all PLRG members and to some 75 other people on his personal “Landvaluescape” research address list. He had been researching technical (mapping) aspects for about 10 years.
- 2. Resolution to re-endorse the Mission of PLRG.** After discussion, a modified Mission, proposed by John Lipetz & seconded by Bill Batt was agreed *nem con*, as follows:
  - 2.1. “To debate and develop ideas and policies on land use and tax reform, among professionals of all kinds, in order to promote land value capture to finance infrastructure and the fair and efficient use of all natural resources on a sustainable basis.”**
- 3. Election of Officers.** The following officers were elected unanimously:-
  - 3.1. Dave Wetzel – Chair**

3.2. Dr **Tony Vickers** – Hon Secretary

3.3. **John Pincham** – Hon Treasurer

3.4. It was also agreed to appoint a representative of PLRG on the Coalition for Economic Justice (CEJ), which PLRG had co-founded in 2008 and which now coordinates campaigning activity in the UK in relation to LVT. **John Treharne** agreed to act as CEJ rep, and requested that he be briefed on its activities.

3.5. Dave had wanted to move that Ashis Choudhury be elected President but as Ashis had not indicated acceptance the motion was not proceeded with.

#### 4. **Discussion on Programme of Activities of PLRG.**

4.1. Tony outlined the research related activities thus far of HGF/PF, PLRG, CUSP and other UK groups. He explained why his own Landvaluescape website was the interim website platform for PLRG. It was agreed that Heather would circulate details of LVT research that Labour Land Campaign had proposed to the Government in 2004. **Action: HW**

4.2. The discussion of research priorities concluded that infrastructure funding was still the most potentially fruitful area of interest. However it was agreed that the difficulty of defining boundaries of 'value influence' for specific capital investments made it necessary to widen debate to cover valuation techniques, ownership and value registers and alternative policies to LVT – such as TIFs and Business Rates. It was also agreed that reform of NNDR onto a site value basis justified more detailed research, since it was a specific policy of more than one UK political party already.

4.3. Overseas based attendees offered to supply contact details of relevant researchers to the Hon Sec: Prof Zhou (Uni of Minnesota); Alex Anas (Uni of NY, Buffalo). UK-based attendees agreed to supply details of relevant contacts to Tony. **Action: ALL**

4.4. It was felt that transport engineering bodies might be sources of funding for PLRG events, also property professions generally. Links should be established with similar research networks and transport consultancies overseas, such as Eric Britton's Paris-based network and Victoria Transport Policy Institute (BC). Various other names (authors and experts) were noted. The Hon Sec should make initial approaches to RICS, RTPI and other bodies. **Action: TV**

4.5. It was agreed that PLRG should aim to meet bi-monthly. A meeting with The London Mayor's current chief policy adviser at City Hall was suggested. **Action: TV**

#### 5. **Annual Subscription & Finances.**

5.1. It was agreed for the time being to keep the subscription at £20 p.a. but reduce to £10 p.a. if paid by Standing Order. No sub would be required of those based overseas, who would be classed as 'affiliates'. Only sterling could be accepted in payment.

5.2. The main expenditure items were expected to be website registration and development. Current funds stood at £580. The officers were authorised to develop an income and expenditure budget for the coming year, based on maintaining this balance of funds while growing the membership and activity levels. **Action: DW, TV, JP**

6. **Next meeting.** It was provisionally agreed to meet on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> July at SES 5.30pm, unless a meeting at City Hall could be arranged before then.
7. **AOB.** There being none, the meeting closed at 7.10pm.